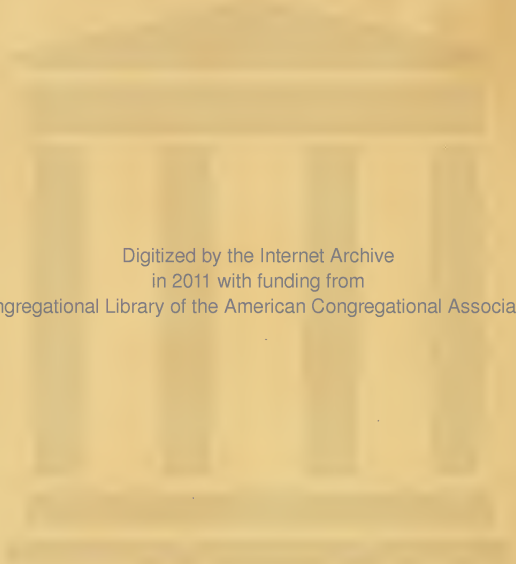


In Memoriam.



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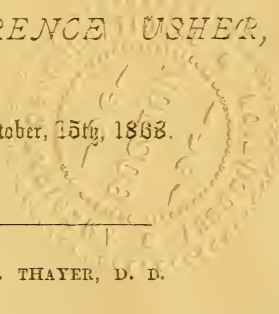
In Memoriam.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL OF

MARY FLORENCE USHER,

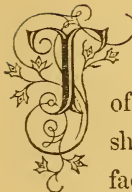
Who Died October, 15th, 1868.



BY REV. T. B. THAYER, D. D.

BOSTON:
1869.

IN MEMORIAM.

 HIS life unmistakably points to another. It is full of indications of a future existence, in which we shall be permitted to see face to face the things which are now seen through a glass darkly. The soul itself—its unanswered wants; its undeveloped capacities; its vast desires, overleaping the boundaries of earth and time; that passionate cry of the loving heart; that hungry reaching out into the dark toward the dear dead; that

longing after immortality—all these reveal possibilities not yet realized, a work still unfinished even at the utmost limit of our years on earth. They are a prophecy of more and better.

Then there are problems of evil, of suffering and bereavement, which seem to demand an explanation that never comes in this life. Many a one has seen his just endeavors, his laudable ambitions, his earnest efforts after a nobler life, shattered into wreck by a power beyond his control ; and has gone down to the grave crushed under the weight of his sorrows, without any answer to his anguished prayer for light, such as was vouchsafed to Joseph and the old patriarchs. I cannot believe otherwise than that the day will come when all such will be enlightened as to the meaning and design of their sorrows and afflictions.

Surely, all they who have suffered uncom-

plainly, trusting to the wisdom and goodness of God ; all they who have borne their burthens patiently and submissively, and in anguish of soul have passed on underneath the shadow of death, believing to the last that the explanation *would* come,—surely these are not disappointed. Standing up there in the clear light of the heavenly revelations, they look down upon the great loom of life, and follow the dark thread of their destiny running in and out of a thousand other destinies, reflecting the beneficent design of God, shading and relieving its variegated figures, till at last they see it reaching up from the loom of the present, and running in silvery brightness into the robe of their own immortal life and glory.

And so shall it be with all who pass through the baptism of suffering. And when they come to see how the million fibres which have put out from their sorrowing hearts, have

grown into the hearts of other sufferers, and given to them strength and patient endurance, and quickened within them inspirations of courage and trust and heavenly peace, will they not have, in these joyful revelations of their new life, a sufficient compensation for all the ills of this life, and a large balance of blessedness running on through the eternal ages?

I believe this. I believe, without doubting, that the heavenly life will show us these compensations in every instance; that the existence of evil in all its relations to good, will there be explained to us, and all the ways of God justified; that, in all those cases where the awful mystery of suffering staggers us, and the darkness continues till it deepens into the grave, the explanation waits our coming into the world of light, where we shall know even as we are known.

But it is not to our reasoning alone, how-

ever conclusive ; it is not to the just demands of the loving heart, nor to the prophecies of the spiritual nature alone, that we are to look for the evidence of another life, wherein sorrow shall give place to joy, and the partings of this life be followed by a union and a fellowship of affection no more to be broken. God has given us something more than hopes and intimations, something more than the deductions of reason. He has sent Christ into the world to *assure* us on this momentous subject ; to teach us the truth, and in his own death and resurrection to *demonstrate* the reality of that new and heavenly life.

And with what emphasis his gospel declares that, as we have borne the image of the earthy, we *shall* also bear the image of the heavenly,—that our present sufferings, which are comparatively but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,—that though subject

to the imperfections and frailties and evils of this earthly estate, we shall finally be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, the liberty of the heavenly life.

Blessed assurance! imparting such confidence in our own death,—such comfort and sweet peace regarding the beloved who have left us; knowing, as we do from these inspired oracles, the spiritual freedom and eternal bliss to which they have gone.

And this is the ever-blessed truth, this the divine consolation, which I bring to you, my dear friends, in this the day of your bereavement. You are witnesses to the worth of this Christian faith. You have been brought up in the school of Christ, and know what a healing balm there is in the precious truth, that the Good Shepherd gathers our lambs into his bosom and bears them tenderly to the heavenly fold, that he may keep them there

securely till we come to take them again.

I do not forget that the trial through which you are passing is painful. I can understand that it is hard to give up such a treasure, to see that sweet face and that graceful form, so fair to look upon, laid away in the grave. I know with what crushing weight this blow falls upon you and yours. I know, how great soever your faith in the divine wisdom of God's orderings, how confident soever the feeling that there is a meeting with the beloved in the blessed hereafter, that the parental heart clings to the dear object of so many hopes and affections. I know how many pleasing dreams and fond expectations and just ambitions clustered around this sweet child; how largely your plans for the future took their character and tone *from* her and *for* her. And with how much reason was all this wealth of tenderness lavished on her,—how much cause for feeling that this

loss is irreparable,—and how difficult it is now, in the overwhelming sense of bereavement and desolation, to rise up to the height of that greatest of all prayers, “Thy will, O God, be done !”

Few parents have been summoned to a severer trial ; few have been called to bury a daughter of such sterling worth, such graces of character, and such rare qualities of mind and heart. “I hardly dare to trust myself, or you, to speak at length ; but the occasion demands at least a few words, in justice to the feelings of the many here who knew and loved her.

Of the sweetest disposition, naturally affectionate, and trusting toward those she loved, she lived in their smiles and kindly words, and drank in the love bestowed upon her, as the flowers drink in the sunlight and the dew. She was the joy of the parental heart, the precious jewel in the home casket.

In manners gentle, winning, and with a personal presence in which were blended, in a remarkable degree for one so young, cordiality and dignity, simplicity and grace, she drew to her side all who came within her influence, and in numberless instances, held them by warm and lasting friendships,—in witness of which, behold this great assemblage of sympathising friends.

She was mentally gifted, with faculties active and quick in comprehension and acquisition, which was specially shown in the ease and rapidity with which, while mostly on a sick bed, she mastered the language of the country in which she was sojourning. And when only thirteen years of age, her published translations from the French attracted attention both for their correctness and elegance.

In her education, nothing had been spared, and nothing had been lost. All her opportunities had been faithfully improved, and few

at her age were more thoroughly furnished in this respect, or more perfectly fitted to adorn every circle, social and intellectual, in which she moved.

With all these attractive qualities, she was of course the object of many flattering attentions; and lovely alike in person, disposition, and manners, she was the admiration of all who came near to her; and yet, through all, there was never the least trace of affectation or vanity, but always she mingled and preserved the simplicity of the child and the dignity of the woman.

And now, this dear and only daughter, this devoted sister, this cherished friend, this loving and lovable girl, has left you. And how singularly prophetic and beautiful those last words which came from her lips. Never willing, through all her sickness, to be left without some one she loved near her,—yet when, after an exhausting attack of cough-

ing, the end approached, she said calmly, and with a look of sweetest resignation, “ Now all go out and leave me alone, *for I am going to rest !* ” Dear child ! she *was* going—she has gone—to rest ; not to a rest from which she will wake again to pain and distress, but to that heavenly rest which will never more be disturbed. And did not God come near to her in that hour, and was it not fulfilled unto her, that pathetic utterance of the Saviour, “ I am not alone, for the Father is with me ? ”

She has preceded you a little through the golden gates into the celestial realms. Let the sharp pain of separation give place, then, to the sweet assurance that it is well with her. Let there be no vain questionings of the gracious and parental providence of the Father ; let no accusations of his wisdom or goodness find place in your thoughts ; but with faith in the assured truth that he doeth all things kindly and well, let the prayer of the Saviour

be ever on your lips and in your heart, "Thy will be done." And for what remains of life's journey, walk forward with a patient spirit, rejoicing in the thought that when the end is reached, it is only to cross the river, and be with your beloved, with God and the Saviour forevermore.

And may the good Lord grant to us all, that we may so live, that when we go hence those who remain may remember us tenderly, and be privileged to speak in our praise, as we do in hers, with assurance that all who hear will answer in accord, and be quickened to new endeavors toward a life of goodness and spiritual beauty. And when death comes, may we go with him cheerfully, knowing that, though for a moment the path may lead down into the dark, it will lead through the dark, at last, into a world of everlasting light and beauty and blessedness.

OBITUARY.

The decease of Miss Mary Florence Usher, only daughter of Hon. James M. Usher, has been announced by the daily press. This is a sad bereavement to her parents, to her brother, and to other relatives and friends. Florence was eighteen last July. Her disease was consumption. She seemed to have a good physical constitution, and until she had passed her sixteenth year, her health was usually good. After she had begun to fail, she accompanied her parents in February, 1867, to Paris, France, confidently expecting to regain her health. Subsequently she visited Switzerland and Italy. When in Italy she was so much better that she spent considerable time in study, and became able to converse readily in the language of that country.

But her convalescence did not long continue, and her parents deemed it best to hasten their return with her to their home in Massachusetts. She was comfortable on the return voyage across the water, and she indulged hopes of recovery, although her parents did not expect she would again be well. She arrived home in May of the present year, and failed gradually until the morning of her decease.

Her sufferings, at times, were very great, yet she bore them with a patience and a fortitude that few possess. She was desirous to recover, but she had no fear of death; and when death's summons came, she peacefully passed to the spirit-land.

We knew Florence well, and we speak for ourself and all her friends in saying that she was a young lady of most superior parts. She was beautiful, amiable, benevolent, cheerful, intellectual, and true.

She was a fine English scholar, and the readers of *The Nation* will remember frequent translations of stories from the French, made by her when she was only thirteen years of age.

We have never written of the decease of one of fairer hopes and brighter promise, and who in youth had a larger circle of devoted friends.

Light be the earth that covers thee, O dutiful and loving child, affectionate sister, charming friend. Upon thy early grave fast fall bedewing tears.

“ Yet while thy loss we weep,
Thy rest we would not break,
For saints in Jesus sweetly sleep,
And in his likeness wake.”

The funeral ceremonies of Miss Usher took place in Boston, on Monday of the present week, in the spacious School Street Church, which was filled with relatives and sympathising friends. All the exercises were appropriate to the deeply interesting and solemn hour. The

organ voluntaries, the selections by the choir, and the Scripture lessons by Rev. Eben Francis, were fitly chosen. The address to the relatives and friends, by Rev. Dr. Thayer, was full of sympathy and Christian consolation. He tenderly alluded to the many virtues of the deceased, and spoke of death as only the golden gate by which the spirit entered to a higher and a holier life revealed by our blessed Lord. The prayer by Rev. Dr. Miner was instinct with religious trust and hope, leading the mourners' thoughts to pious confidence in God, and resignation to His will who doeth all things well.

P. H. S.

WHERE DWELLS THE SPIRIT ?

Who, that knows
Whither goes
The spirit when it leaves its clay,
And the eye's light
Is quenched in night,
And the tired pulses cease to play ?

Doth it rise
To the skies,
Above this world of sin and blight,
And with the sun
His circle run,
Of glory, in his track of light ?

Doth it go
Far below,
Down where the earth its treasures hides ;
Where no eye
Can descry
What in its deep, dark caves abides ?

Doth it roam
O'er the foam
Of the wide sea's majestic bound ?
Or 'neath the waves
In coral caves,
Where solemn silence reigns around ?

Is it near
To us here,
In this strange world of joy and pain,
Souls to win
From dark sin,
With the blessed Christ to reign ?

Doth it keep,
And never sleep,
Vigils around the quiet bed ?
Doth it bless,
When distress
Falls heavy on the aching head ?

Do not oft,
Whispers soft,
From the departed, reach us here ;
And voices sweet
Our senses greet,
Familiar to the listening ear ?

Clothed in light,
Spirits bright
God's ministering angels, come,
With mission clear
From a holier sphere,
To guide our wandering footsteps home !

GREENWOOD, OCT., 1868.

P. H. S.

